

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 SCI-06 EB-11 COME-00 ACDA-19

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN, PN, PQ, WMO, GT, ICAO

SUBJ: WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION REGION IV MEETING

REF: STATE 236572 AND 237092; PANAMA A-124 OF JUNE 6, 1973;

STATE 134153

SUMMARY: IN EMBASSY VIEW, FOUR-LETTER ICAO STATION IDENTIFYING SYMBOLS SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE CHANGED FROM "CANAL ZONE" TO "PANAMA" FOR LISTING OF STATIONS IN WMO BASIC SYNOPTIC NETWORK. TO DO SO WOULD IMPLY PANAMANIAN JURISDICTION IN CANAL ZONE WHICH ISSUE IS DEPENDENT UPON NEW TREATY RELATIONSHIP. END SUMMARY.

1. FOR REASONS ANALOGOUS TO PROBLEM WHICH AROSE WITH GOP OVER DESIGNATION OF RADIO FREQUENCIES THNDER MONTREAUX CONVENTION, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT WE SHOULD RESIST CHANGING MANNER OF LISTING STATION IDENTIFIERS FOR BASIC SYNOPTIC NETWORK (SEE PANAMA A-124).

2. AS WE UNDERSTAND SITUATION WHICH CAME UP AT WMO REGION IV MEETING, PANAMANIAN DELEGATE INSISTED THAT ICAO FOUR-LETTER IDENTIFIERS FOR "CANAL ZONE" BE CHANGED TO READ "PANAMA",

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ASSUMING THAT CHANGE FROM LETTER "B" TO "P" WOULD CONSITUTUE THIS

DISTINCTION. POSITION OF DELEGATE WAS CONSISTENT WITH GOP POLICY OF PUSHING "SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE" WHENEVER POSSIBLE. APPARENTLY WMO AGREED TO ADOPT ANY CHANGES MADE BY ICAO AT SOME FUTURE TIME.

3. EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO) FOUR-LETTER IDENTIFIERS, SUCH AS "MBFS", ORIGINALLY DID NOT HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANCE. "M" WAS USED AS FIRST LETTER FOR ALL AIR TERMINALS IN THIS AREA WHILE "BFS" WAS ARBITRARY DESIGNATION, FOR EXAMPLE, TO REPRESENT "BALBOA-FORT SHERMAN." IT HAS SINCE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY GOP THAT SECOND LETTER, "B", IS TRADITIONAL SYMBOL FOR USG FACILITIES WITHIN CANAL ZONE. BECAUSE OF THIS ASSOCIATION, CHANGING SECOND LETTER, "B" (US CONTROL) TO "P" (PANAMA CONTROL), WOULD PLACE USG (PARTICULARLY FAA) IN UNTENABLE POSITION IN DEALING WITH PANAMANIAN CIVIL AERONAUTICS ADMINISTRATION (DIRECCION DE AERONAUTICA CIVIL - DAC). UNDER 1949 BILATERAL AIR TRAFFIC AGREEMENT, FAA-BALBOA PROVIDES AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL OVER AREA INCLUDING ALL OF REPUBLIC OF PANAMA. BECAUSE OF IMPLICATIONS FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND JURISDICTION, EMBASSY ALSO INFORMED THAT FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE ANY CHANGES IN PRESENT STATION IDENTIFIERS.

4. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT, IF SUBJECT OF FOUR-LETTER STATION IDENTIFIERS COMES UP IN LISTING BASIC SYNOPTIC NETWORK, ANY PROPOSAL TO CHANGE IDENTIFIERS FROM "CANAL ZONE" TO "PANAMA" BE OPPOSED FOR SAME REASON THAT USG RESISTED GOP ASSERTION OF RIGHT TO ASSIGN RADIO FREQUENCIES IN CANAL ZONE UNDER MONTREUX CONVENTION.
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